

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Allowed) A safety buckle, comprising:

a socket having a cavity with a first surface;

a first catch in the cavity and adjoining the first surface and directed away from the first surface;

a plug with a central arm for insertion into the socket;

a first latch on the central arm sized and positioned to permit engagement with the first catch when the plug is inserted into the socket in a first relative orientation to releaseably retain the plug and socket together;

a second catch or second latch on an opposing side of the cavity or central arm, respectively, and sized and positioned with a symmetry to the first catch or first latch, respectively, to permit an alternate engagement with the corresponding first catch or first latch, such that the socket and plug may be releaseably retained together in a second relative orientation different from the first relative orientation;

one of the first or second latches on the central arm or one of the first or second catches in the cavity being free from engagement when the plug and socket are releaseably retained together; and

a disengagement device on the socket or plug and integral with the socket or plug and operable to displace the central arm

when actuated to disengage one or more engagements involving the central arm.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Allowed) The buckle according to claim 1, wherein the central arm includes the second latch for cooperating with the first catch of the socket.

4 - 23. (Canceled)

24. (Allowed) The buckle according to claim 1, wherein:

the socket includes the second catch; and

the first latch is a protrusion of the central arm.

25. (Allowed) The buckle according to claim 1, wherein:

the cavity comprises a second surface opposing the first surface;

the first catch comprises a first opening in the first surface;

the second catch comprises a second opening in the second surface;

the first and second openings being sized and shaped to cooperate with the first latch on the central arm of the plug.

26. (Allowed) A safety buckle, comprising:

a first buckle member having a projection with a first engagement part located thereon;

a second buckle member having a cavity for receiving the projection with a second engagement part located therein;

the first and second engagement parts being cooperative to retain the first and second buckle members together when the projection is inserted into the cavity in a first relative orientation;

one of the first or second engagement parts having a symmetrically functional counterpart, such that another of the first or second engagement parts cooperates with the counterpart to retain the first and second buckle members together when the projection is inserted into the cavity in a relative orientation different from the first relative orientation, the one of the first or second engagement parts being free from engagement; and

a disengagement device integral with the first or second buckle member and operable to displace the projection to disengage cooperative engagement parts or the counterpart when actuated.

27. (Allowed) The safety buckle according to claim 26, wherein the projection further comprises a central arm.

28. (Allowed) The safety buckle according to claim 27, wherein the counterpart is located on an opposite side of the central arm from the first engagement part.

29. (Allowed) The safety buckle according to claim 26, wherein the projection further comprises two central arms, one central arm having the first engagement part thereon, and the other central arm having the counterpart.

30. (Allowed) The safety buckle according to claim 27, wherein the first engagement part is on the central arm and is formed as a recess with a shoulder near an end of the central arm, the counterpart also being arranged on the central arm.

31. (Allowed) The safety buckle according to claim 26, wherein one of the first or second engagement parts is located on the disengagement device.

32. (Currently Amended) A safety buckle that can be clasped in a plurality of orientations, comprising:

a first buckle member and a second buckle member, being complementary shaped to fit together with each other in a clasped condition;

a cavity in one of the first or second buckle members;

a projection on another of the first or second buckle members, the projection being inserted into the cavity of the one of the first or second buckle members in the clasped condition;

a first engagement structure on the projection and a second engagement structure in the cavity, the first and second engagement structures being sized and positioned to cooperate with each other to retain the first and second buckle members together in the clasped condition in a first orientation;

~~another~~ a third engagement structure located on the projection ~~or in the cavity~~ and sized and positioned to cooperate with ~~one of the first or second engagement structures~~ to retain the first and second buckle members together in the clasped condition in a second orientation different from the first orientation;

~~another of the first or second engagement structures~~ being free from engagement in the second orientation;

the projection further comprising two central arms, one central arm having the first engagement structure, and the other central arm having the ~~another~~ third engagement structure the two

central arms being symmetrical about an axis lying along an insertion direction of the projection to the cavity; and

a disengagement device integral with the first or the second buckle member and operable to displace the projection to disengage ~~cooperative engagement structures~~ the first and second engagement structures when in the first orientation and the second and third engagement structures when in the second orientation when actuated.

33-35. (Canceled)

36. (Currently Amended) The safety buckle according to claim ~~34~~32, wherein the first engagement structure or the ~~another~~third engagement structure on ~~the~~ a respective central arm is formed as a recess with a shoulder near an end of the respective central arm.

37. (Canceled)